The Courier Herald

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FPH, DFD asks people to think safety when it comes to Thanksgiving cooking

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

Flames were visible as members of the Dublin Fire Department lowered a frozen turkey into a pot of hot grease. Thankfully, nothing got out of hand as the firefighters safely put out the turkey.

It was all done as a demonstration on how not to deep fry a turkey and keep people who have desires to cook one this way safe this Thanksgiving.

"Nationwide around the Thanksgiving holiday, ER's see an influx of injuries related to Thanksgiving gatherings," said Liz Green, director of marketing at Fairview Park Hospital. "We like to do as much education as we can about topics like this when we know we can see an influx of injury."

And this is why the hospital partners with the DFD. They set up a pot with hot grease and lowered a frozen turkey into it. Absolutely not the right way of cooking the bird.

"It can go very badly, very quickly," Green said. "We would rather not see them in the emergency room of the hospital because that is a bad way to spend your Thanksgiving. We think this is a good way to teach people about safety."

DFD Lt. Adam Hobbs agreed. If a person does get injured preparing a Thanksgiving meal, they are asked to also call 911 for help and to report the incident, especially if it is an incident involving a fire.

"We don't want people to have any injuries or mishaps along the way," Hobbs said. "That's why we fall in line with this turkey demonstration."

The main reason for a fire on Thanksgiving is a fire from deep frying a turkey. It is either because the pot is on unleveled ground and tips over and the grease catches on fire, or because there is water on the turkey or it is still frozen.

"And the water mixture with the oil causes a big problem and eventually catches it on fire," Hobbs said. "A frozen turkey should never be placed into hot grease. You want to make sure it is completely thawed with no ice on it whatsoever. Also, when you put it in the deep fryer, you want to submerge it slowly."

If that happens, everybody needs to be safe and get away from the fire.

"Let us come out and deal with it from there," Hobbs said. "If you try to put water on it, it is no different than the water that is in the turkey. It is going to erupt violently and the fire is going to get bigger. It's going to splash and you will have to worry about third degree burns also. The best thing is to leave it alone and let us deal with it."



Flames shoot out of the bottom of a pot as members of the Dublin Fire Department demonstrate how not to deep fry a turkey/PAYTON TOWNS III



BLUE NOISE...

The Johnson County Trojans had a fever, and the only prescription was... well, more than just cowbell. Their fans brought along rock-filled milk jugs and horns, in addition to the clanging percussion instruments, to fill The Blue Monster with noise for Friday's second-round playoff game with Clinch County. JoCo came from behind late to hold off the Panthers, and reach the state quarterfinals. Bleckley and Dodge counties also came up with big wins to advance, though losses brought a bitter ending to playoff runs for Dublin, West Laurens and Treutlen in the rest of the area's action. For more coverage, see Sports, page 5/RALPH JACKSON

Despite tax hikes, many Laurens County homeowners paying less

By RODNEY MANLEY
Staff Writer

Despite both the county Board of Education and County Commission both raising taxes this year, some Laurens County homeowners might actually see a decrease in their property taxes.

Tax bills were mailed Nov. 10, and taxpayers should have their bills by now, said Laurens County Tax Commissioner Darla Brown, whose office's main function in the taxing process is billing and collecting local taxes.

Most residents are opening those bills to find the tax increases on their homestead properties – their primary residences and adjoining property – have been offset by a grant from a property relief bill passed by the Legislature earlier this year, Brown said.

The 2026 Homeowners Tax Relief Grant program is set to refund $950 million to property owners, but through a one-time homestead exemption. Rather than receiving a check or direct deposit, homeowners can deduct another $18,000 from their home's taxable value.

The savings are substantial and are noted on the tax bills.

For county residents paying both county and county Board of Education taxes, the total has been reduced by $378. That total includes $126 saved in county government taxes and $254 in school taxes.



Tax bills were mailed Nov. 10, and taxpayers should have their bills by now, said Laurens County Tax Commissioner Darla Brown/RODNEY MANLEY

Dublin homeowners do not pay county school taxes, but they do pay taxes to fund county government, in addition to paying city and city school taxes. That means they will save $126 on their county taxes.

There is a catch, however. Homeowners must have filed for a homestead exemption to qualify.

The deadline to file for this year has passed, but Brown recommends that residents apply for the homestead exemption for future tax breaks.

"A homestead exemption requires that it be your permanent residence, and if you don't have a homestead exemption on your permanent residence, I would definitely suggest that you apply for one because there are tax credits coming in the future for homestead properties," Brown said.

Brown spoke to the County Commission earlier this week to update the board on the status of the tax bills. Taxpayers often blame her office for their taxes going up or with problems with their assessments, and she took the opportunity to reiterate her office's role in the taxing process, which is billing and collecting the taxes levied by the commissioners and the county school board according to the tax digest set by the County Board of Assessors.

"As the tax commissioner, my function is to take the data from the board of assessors – this data file has all of the addresses, the values, all of the exemptions. I'm not allowed to

TAX
Continued on page 2

2 arrested in Florida for allegedly scamming senior adults

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

Two people from Laurens County have been charged by a sheriff's office for allegedly attempting to scam a Bay County couple.

According to a Bay County Sheriff's Office post, Jalen Stanley, 24, and Laportia Johnson, 41, were arrested after investigators found out about the crime before it took place.

The victims, who were both over the age of 75, were contacted by someone who said they were with the federal government and told them they were being investigated for money laundering. The couple were told to withdraw $30,000 and give it to a federal agent for verification.

Deputies found out about the scam before the couple could collect the money. Law enforcement monitored calls for three days and came up with a plan to catch those responsible for the scam.

Instead of putting out the victim's money, deputies placed an empty decoy package. Eventually, Stanley and Johnson arrived to retrieve the package.

After the arrest, the decoy package, a stolen Glock equipped with a firearm switch, oxycodone pills and approximately $5,000 in cash was found in Stanley's vehicle. He was charged with grand theft, scheme to defraud, drug possession and multiple firearm-related offenses. Johnson was charged with grand theft and scheme to defraud.

Investigators believed Stanley was the middleman, collecting packages from potential victims and delivering them to another person in Atlanta.

The Bay County Sheriff's Office said the case remains active.

East Dublin man arrested for murder

BY PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

A 40-year-old East Dublin man was arrested in connection with the shooting death of a Dublin man that happened earlier this month.

According to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Samuel Lee Demmons was charged with felony murder, malice murder, aggravated assault and possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony in the death of Christian Foskey, that happened on Thursday, Nov. 5.

Demmons was arrested on Nov. 17 and transported to the Laurens County Jail. On Nov. 5, the GBI was requested by the DPD who responded to a report of shots fired in the area of West Moore Street around 9:09 p.m. Police found a man, later identified as Foskey, located near a home in the 100 block of West Moore Street with a gunshot wound.

Foskey was transported to Fairview Park Hospital. According to Laurens County Deputy Coroner Nathan Stanley, Foskey was pronounced dead at 9:54 p.m. on Nov. 5 at the hospital by an ER doctor.

The investigation remains active and ongoing. Anyone with information is asked to call the GBI Regional Investigative Office in Eastman at (478) 374-6988 or the Dublin Police Department at (478) 275-0803. Anonymous tips can also be submitted by calling the GBI tipline at 800-597-TIPS (8477), online at http://gbi.georgia.gov/submit-tips-online, or by downloading the See Something, Send Something mobile application.

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OBITUARIES



Ashley Renee Burch

Funeral services for Ashley Renee Burch, 39 will be held at 3 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 22, 2026, at Baker Baptist Church, with interment to follow at Burch Family Cemetery. Rev. Joey Diers will officiate.

Ashley was born Feb. 14, 1987, in Dublin, Georgia. She was the daughter of the late Joseph "Joe" Lafayette Burch. She was a Registered Nurse at McRae Manor Nursing Home. She was a member of Baker Baptist Church. Ashley passed away Tuesday, Nov. 17, 2026, at Memorial Health University Hospital in Savannah.

Ashley is survived by her mother, Sandra Phillips Burch of Alamo; a brother, Chad Burch of Dublin; an aunt, Rebecca Moore of Cedar Grove; a nephew, C.J. Burch; and a niece, Savannah Grantham.

Pallbearers will be Brad Smith, Greg Sellars, Burney Horne, Jeffery Moore, Tom Pezold and John Sellars.

The family will receive friends from 2:00 P.M. until 3:00 P.M. Sunday, November 22, 2026, at Baker Baptist Church.

Stanley Funeral Homes and Crematory/Dublin Chapel has charge of funeral arrangements. To sign the Online Register please visit www.stanleyfuneralhome.com.

STANLEY Funeral Homes & Crematory



Dianne Bass Jackson

Dianne Bass Jackson, affectionately known as "Queenie," passed away on Nov. 20, 2026, in Dublin, Georgia, at the age of 76.

She was born on April 23, 1950, in Dublin, Georgia, to the late Charles and Mary Bass. A lifelong resident of the community she loved, Dianne carried with her the values of faith, family, kindness and service throughout every season of her life. She was a devoted Christian and a member of Dudley Baptist Church.

Dianne graduated from Dublin High School in 1968 then attended Middle Georgia College followed by the University of Georgia and Columbus College earning her masters to become a Certified Speech and Language Pathologist and returning home to join the family business from 1985 to 2023. Through those years she used her gift to touch many lives and to teach many future speech pathologists. While she had not formally worked in a few years, it was not uncommon for her to still be around the office and she still used her speech frequently and had to be reminded by Chuck often to let his patients get to work!

Family was at the center of Queenie's life, and she loved hers with all of her heart. She is survived by her husband, Randy Jackson; her daughter, Emilie Wages Moss; her son, Don Wages and his wife, Sherry; her son, Scott Jackson and his wife, McKenzie; and her son, Tom Jackson and his wife, Dell. She is also survived by her sister, Carol Bass Collins and her husband, Glynn; and her brother, Chuck Bass and his wife, Denise. Dianne was a cherished grandmother to Charlie-Bass Wages, Isabella Moss, Adelaide Moss, Sunnie-York Wages, Demmie Moss, Finlee Moss, Kohen Wages, Raegan Wages, Kaiser Jackson, Cross Jackson, Emma Jackson, Michael Jackson, Karen Jackson, Melissa Jackson, and Eli Jackson. Her love for her children and grandchildren was unwavering, and she supported each of them in all of their activities with every ounce of her heart.

Those who knew Queenie will remember her as a woman with a heart of gold. She never met a stranger, and her kindness made people feel welcomed, valued, and loved. She was the kind of friend who stood beside others, offering loyalty, encouragement, and a listening ear. Her laughter, her grace, and her genuine interest in others left a lasting impression on everyone fortunate enough to know her.

Queenie also found great joy in the simple and meaningful moments of life. She cherished time spent with her family and enjoyed playing bridge with Dublin Cotillion Club. She was a dedicated member of the Dublin Service League for 10 years. She treasured her beloved fur babies, Evie Rue and Dollie Rose, held a special place in her heart, bringing her endless comfort and companionship. Whether it was a football game, softball game, basketball game, or whatever sport was in season, Queenie could always be found on the sidelines, proudly cheering on her children and grandchildren. She rarely missed a game and was always one of their biggest supporters, making sure they knew just how proud she was of them. Through her love, warmth and unwavering devotion to those she held dear, Queenie had a special way of turning even the simplest moments into treasured memories.

Her life was a beautiful reflection of faith, devotion, and love, and her memory will continue to live on in the hearts of her family, friends, and all who were blessed to know her.

A life so well lived leaves behind a legacy that cannot be measured in words alone. Queenie will be remembered for her compassion, her steadfast love for her family, her devotion to her faith, and the kindness she shared so freely with others. She will be deeply missed and forever cherished.

Services were held at 3 p.m., on Sunday, Nov. 22, 2026 Dudley Baptist Church with Rev. Matt Green and Rev. Gerald Frazier officiating. Visitation will start at 1:30 at Dudley Baptist Church. Burial will follow at Dublin Memorial Gardens.

Pallbearers will be Eric Allen, Tim Edenfield, Greg Crabb, Jimmy Allgood, Mike Cummings, Mike Cauley.

Honorary pallbearers will be Wadley Moore, Scott Jackson, Tom Jackson and Ricky Lord and Blessed Believers Sunday School class.

In lieu of flowers donations can be made to Promise of Hope.

Townsend Brothers Funeral Home in Dublin, Ga., is in charge of arrangements. Please visit www.townsendfuneralhome.com for service updates and to sign the online memorial register.



Mae Stephens Hughes

Funeral services for Mae Stephens Hughes, 77, were held at 1 p.m. Monday, Nov. 23, 2026, in the Chan Stanley Memorial Chapel of Stanley Funeral Home and Crematory, with interment to follow at Hazelhurst City Cemetery. Mr. Jerry Stephens and Mr. Jacob Stephens will officiate.

Mrs. Hughes was born Aug. 3, 1949, in Valdosta, Georgia. She was the daughter of the late William Blonnie Stephens and Evie Durrance Stephens. She was also preceded in death by her husband, Ivey Dewaine Hughes; and a grandson, Michael Shane Pernell Jr. Mrs. Hughes passed away, Friday, Nov. 20, 2026, at her residence.

Mrs. Hughes is survived by her son, Edwin Hughes (Lori); three daughters, Susan Hilton, Denice Hughes (Jonathon), and Lynn Buzzel (Kevin); two brothers, Thomas Stephens and Jerry Stephens; three sisters, Elan Case, Elsie Muns, and Thelma Gonzales; 9 grandchildren, Lori Terry (Billy), Ashley Warren (Robert), Amanda Lewis (Drayton), Crystal Wicker (William), Alicia Oliver, Derek Wynn, Christopher Ryan Hilton, Tracy Scott (Paige), and Christopher Scott (Haley); 23 great-grandchildren; Hunter Overstreet, Cayden Fordham, Jada Fordham, Payton Thomas, Nolan Terry, Noah Fordham, McKinley Cannady, Tyler Warren, Ella Wynn, Addison Warren, Piper Terry, Kimbree McDaniel, Sadie Terry, Adalynn Scott, Ensley Young, Camden Scott, John Warren, Preslee Young, Kinsley Wynn, Tate Scott, Aryton Wynn, Tracen Scott, and Boone Wicker; and 4 great-great grandchildren, Eston Fordham, Lakelynn Mae Sawyer, Verah Fordham and Clay Sawyer.

Pallbearers will be Ryan Hilton, Drayton Lewis, Jonathan Shiver, Tracy Scott, Hunter Overstreet and Christopher Scott.

The family received friends from 12 p.m. until 1 p.m. Monday, Nov. 23, 2026, at the funeral home. The family will also meet at the residence of Susan Hilton at 1430 Rockledge Road, Rockledge, GA 30454.

Stanley Funeral Homes and Crematory/Dublin Chapel has charge of funeral arrangements. To sign the Online Register please visit www.stanleyfuneralhome.com.

STANLEY Funeral Homes & Crematory



Dannice Annette Rozier

Funeral services for Dannice Annette Rozier, 67 will be held at 1 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 24, 2026 at New Beginning Pentecostal Church at 1883 Julliette Road, Forsyth, GA 31029. Rev. Mark Goolsby will officiate.

Ms. Rozier was born June 7, 1959, in Fort Valley, Georgia. She was the daughter of the late Richard VanSkike and Mildred Rogers VanSkike. She was also preceded in death by her siblings, David Bowman, Randolyn Passmore, Belinda VanSkike, and John Richard VanSkike. She was the former owner of Ricks Barbeque. Ms. Rozier passed away Friday, Nov. 20, 2026, at Fairview Park Hospital.

Ms. Rozier is survived by her son, Larry Rozier Jr. (Patricia); a daughter, Jennifer Cox (Steven); five grandchildren, Eric Scott (Cara), Chandler Laird (Crystal), Makenzie Laird, Hunter Cox and Noah Rozier; two sisters, Lynda Etheridge and Cindi Veal; four great-grandchildren, Jackson, Walker, Leo, Luca; and nine nieces and nephews.

Stanley Funeral Homes and Crematory/Dublin Chapel has charge of funeral arrangements. To sign the Online Register please visit www.stanleyfuneralhome.com.

STANLEY Funeral Homes & Crematory

Robert Hall

Mr. Robert Hall of Wrightsville, Georgia passed away on Sunday, November 22, 2026. Funeral arrangements are incomplete at this time. www.ServicesByDudley.com

Jodie Lee Adams

Mrs. Jodie Lee Adams of Dublin, Georgia passed away on Sunday, Nov. 22, 2026. Funeral arrangements are incomplete at this time. www.ServicesByDudley.com.

BIRTHDAYS

Nov. 18
Dianne Williams

Nov. 24
Andrea Hall
Maya Jordan
Willie Claude Smith

ANNIVERSARY

Nov. 25
Gregory & Valery Pooler

TAX

Continued from page 1

change any of this information," Brown said. "I apply the millage rate from you, the Board of Commissioners, the millage rate from the Laurens County Board of Education and, as long as you're not a city taxpayer, I send out that bill and I collect that bill."

The County Commission passed an almost 31 percent tax increase in September, which officials said would raise taxes on a $200,000 home by about $120 a year.

The county Board of Education kept its millage rate at 14 mills, rather than rolling it back to offset growth in the county tax digest and thus resulting in a net tax increase of almost 3 percent. School officials said homeowners could expect to pay almost $31 more in taxes each year on a $200,000 home.

However, those estimates rely on home values remaining the same from the previous year. Owners of homes that increased by $50,000 in net assessed value would pay about $500 more in county taxes and, because of the higher millage rate, about $700 more in county school taxes.

For many property owners, the grant program's one-time exemption will at least ease the sting from the increases, if not offset them.

The due date for this year's county and county school taxes is Jan. 10. Brown encouraged property owners who have not received their bills to call her office at (478) 272-6994 or email her at browndw@dlcga.com.

"If you did not receive a bill, please reach out to me," she said.



Thanksgiving Holiday Publishing Schedule for The Courier Herald

The Courier Herald will publish on Tuesday, Nov. 25, and a combined paper for Thursday, Nov 26, & Saturday, Nov 28.

Deadlines for the Thurs-Sat combo paper will be
Monday Nov. 23rd at noon

The Courier Herald office **WILL CLOSE AT NOON ON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25TH** AND WILL BE CLOSED Thanksgiving Day and Friday Nov 27.

Happy Thanksgiving!




Attorney Brian Arnold

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POLICE BEAT...

Dublin Police Department

- Lorenzo Jamel Charleston, 39, was charged with disorderly conduct, at 9:50 p.m. on Oct. 23 on PM Watson Drive at the Baymont Inn about a man going around and knocking on people's rooms and causing a disturbance.

Once on scene, the officer made contact with the offender, who was in the parking lot coming from a door and walked up to the officer's patrol unit and would not move away from the door.

Charleston refused to ID himself. The officer asked again what his name was but he would not give his full name. He was eventually arrested and transported to the Laurens County Jail. He was trespassed from the property at the request of the manager on duty.

- Derek Shane Ricks, 34, was charged with driving while license suspended or revoked, around 2:07 a.m. on Oct. 27.

An officer made a routine traffic stop at the intersection of Telfair Street and Simmons Street. The officer saw a white vehicle traveling in the Telfair Street area with a defective passenger-side rear taillight that was not illuminated. The officer made contact with the driver, later identified as Ricks.

The officer was later advised by dispatch that Rick's driver's license was suspended. Ricks was arrested and transported to the police department for fingerprinting. He was later released after being issued a citation and written warning for the defective passenger-side rear taillight.

- An officer was dispatched to South Jefferson Street for a call in reference to terroristic threats. Officers were dispatched to the police department regarding a call about a car that was following her and trying to block her in at the store.

Laurens County Sheriff's Office

- A deputy responded to a trespassing call on Highway 80 West in Dudley around 7:02 p.m. on Oct. 14.

- A shoplifting happened on Veterans Boulevard around 8:07 p.m. on Oct. 14.

- A trespass call was made at 2 p.m. on Turkey Creek Circle on Oct. 19.

- A deputy responded to a removal on Willow T. Stables around 2:19 p.m. on Oct. 19.

- A woman met with a deputy about filing a report about an incident that happened at the intersection of Ben Hall and Thundering Springs in East Dublin around 4:15 p.m. on Oct. 19.

- On Oct. 17, at 3:37 a.m., a deputy was dispatched to Smithfield Road in reference to an entering auto.

- On Oct. 16, around 6:15 p.m., a deputy was dispatched by Laurens County 911 to Campground Road in reference to possible shots being fired in the area.

- On Oct. 15, a deputy responded to the sheriff's office to help a citizen file a report about an incident on Deerwood Trail that happened around 6:09 p.m.

Editor's note: This information is public record and was taken from reports of local law enforcement agencies. These reports do not reflect guilt or innocence. An "arrest" does not always indicate incarceration. Readers are cautioned that people may have similar names. Police Beat does not identify minor children, victims of sexual assault, suicide attempts or medical conditions. Cases dismissed do not appear if the newspaper is notified before the deadline.

NEWS DIGEST

Small Business Saturday is on November 28.

American Pickers, the television show that highlights unique collections and the interesting people behind them, is searching for and one-of-a-kind items with incredible stories - collections the Pickers have never seen before.

If someone is interested in being considered for the show, please have them contact American Pickers at:

Phone: (646) 493-2184

Email: AmericanPickers@cineflix.com

They are asking people to include their full name, city and state, contact information, and a brief description of their collection.

The Pickers only visit private collections. They have expressed that they are not looking for stores, malls, flea markets, museums, auctions, businesses, or collections that are open to the public.

Fairview Park Hospital earns 10th consecutive "A" hospital safety grade

Fairview Park Hospital has earned its tenth consecutive "A" Hospital Safety Grade from The Leapfrog Group for Fall 2026, marking five years of continued excellence in patient safety. This achievement reinforces Fairview's designation as a "Straight A" hospital. Being named a "Straight A" hospital is a distinction recognizing the consistent dedication and commitment of hospitals that have received "A" grades five or more times in a row.

Reaching this milestone reflects the hospital's ongoing dedication to providing safe, high-quality care and the collective efforts of colleagues throughout the organization who make patient safety a priority every day.

"Receiving our tenth consecutive 'A' is an incredible honor and a reflection of the dedication our team brings to caring for our patients each day," said Brad Griffin, FACHE, President and CEO of Fairview Park Hospital. "I am proud of our colleagues for their unwavering commitment to safety, quality, and compassion. This recognition belongs to them, and it reinforces the trust our community places in us."

As a consistently recognized top-performing hospital in Georgia, Fairview Park Hospital remains focused on maintaining the highest standards of care and creating a safe, supportive environment for every patient and family it serves. The Leapfrog Group is an independent national nonprofit organization that evaluates hospitals on their commitment to patient safety. Released twice annually, its Hospital Safety Grades assess how effectively hospitals protect patients from preventable errors, injuries, and accidents.

Middle Georgia State University's Historic Growth Contributes to Record Year for USG

University leads USG in percentage growth as enrollment reaches 10,070 and retention rises to a 10-year high

Middle Georgia State University has received a University System of Georgia Chancellor's Cup in recognition of its outstanding enrollment growth, marking a milestone for an institution that welcomed a historic record 10,070 students this fall.

MGA's enrollment increased 14.1 percent from fall 2025 to fall 2026, the largest percentage gain among the University System of Georgia's nine state universities, as well as in the system overall. The University added 1,242 students over the previous fall, when enrollment stood at 8,828.

The Chancellor's Cup recognizes enrollment growth within the University System's institutional sectors. MGA's achievement comes as the system as a whole continues to grow: USG nrollment increased 2.7 percent and reached 392,581 students this fall, or more than 10,400 students over the previous year.

Georgia Farm Bureau (GFB) members will gather on Jekyll Island Dec. 6-8 for the organization's 89th annual convention.

The convention theme, "Strong Farms. Strong Georgia." highlights GFB's commitment to ensure that the state's farms endure.

Agriculture has long been the cornerstone of Georgia's economy. According to UGA's Georgia Ag Impact report, farming and related businesses contributed $100.4 billion to the state's economy in 2024, providing more than 370,000 jobs and serving as the primary driving force of many of the state's rural communities. Georgia's farmers and ranchers produced commodities valued at more than $18 billion.

This year will be the 62nd time GFB has held its convention on Jekyll Island, where members celebrate agriculture's historic and far-reaching impact on the state while charting the organization's course for the coming year.

"Georgia Farm Bureau's strength is in its members, and our convention is a time to solidify their unity into one voice for Georgia agriculture," GFB President Tom McCall said. "Our convention is always a special opportunity for our members to reconnect with long-time friends and create new connections."

To celebrate its first statewide membership increase since 2015, GFB will offer its thanks to county leaders, volunteers and staff who made it possible.

Convention activities begin Dec. 6 at 9 a.m. at the Jekyll Island Convention Center with a Sunday service during which GFB leaders who have died during the past year will be memorialized. Inspirational music will be provided by Al McCall and Mark Wallace. A devotion will be given by GFB Middle Georgia Vice President Ralph Caldwell.

Sunday events include the opening of a trade show with nearly 70 exhibitors representing eorgia agricultural organizations, government agencies and businesses.For the fourth year, the Georgia Foundation for Agriculture's Christmas on the Farm Bingo will be held Dec. 6 beginning at 3:30 p.m. at the convention center.

Led by emcee John Holcomb of the Georgia Farm Monitor TV show, guests will enjoy 10 rounds of bingo, Christmas trivia, door prizes, a raffle, music, refreshments, and a pop-up shop from Brittney's Closet, a Jekyll Island boutique. Visit www.gafoundationag.org/bingo for complete details and to buy advance tickets. Tickets will also be sold at the convention.

Dublin After Five Women's Connection holding 'A Christmas to Remember in Song'

SPECIAL TO THE COURIER HERALD

Dublin After Five Women's Connection cordially invites all ladies and gentlemen to join us at the Dublin Country Club on Thursday, Dec. 3, 2026, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. for a lovely evening filled with fellowship, music and inspiration.

Robbie Curry will delight us with his guitar and singing talents. Curry has spent most of his life in California working with electronic control systems in the pharmacy industry and he and his wife Edith moved back to Dublin in 2020. Tom Maxwell will join Curry in a mini-concert of country and traditional Christmas songs. The talented Regina Rowe will be playing our buffet music.

We are excited to have Sue Hall as our speaker for the evening. Hall's speaking topic will be "Like Sands in the Hourglass, So Are the Days of Our Life." The image suggests that individual days accumulate to form a life. Small, ordinary moments-rather than great events- compose the whole. Each grain is a discrete moment that cannot be returned once it has passed. Unlike the sand in an hourglass, we can't turn it over and start again.

Hall is a native of Wrightsville, Ga., and was an elementary school teacher for 30 plus years. She is an ocean girl and says the ocean not only draws her but has taught her many of life's lessons. Hall will be sharing some of those life lessons with us.

Please call Dianne (478)272-6341 or Marge (478) 875-3948 for reservations or cancellations by Tuesday, Dec. 1. The buffet cost is $21, inclusive, and requires a reservation. We ask that people honor their reservation, cancel it, or give it to a friend. The printing of the invitations is a courtesy and generosity of the Emerald Ease.



Kids Send Your Letter to Santa!

Email your Christmas list to us, so Santa can see it in the newspaper!

Email tchsanta@gmail.com

All letters must be received by December 8th. for inclusion in our Letters to Santa special section.

LETTERS TO Santa

Special Section Prints Thursday, December 24th!

A Special Section From The Courier Herald

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Happy Thanksgiving

From Our Family to Yours



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Remembering family, food at Thanksgiving

MAN ABOUT TOWN...



By PAYTON TOWNS III

This Thanksgiving is going to be different, but that is nothing new. There is always one thing that will never change though, and I'll get to that shortly.

Thanksgiving has always been one of my favorite holidays, especially when all the family can gather in one location. That is the way it used to be when I was growing up.

Let me take you to my grandmother's kitchen. It seemed like a magical place. After breakfast, she would show us grandkids out so that she, my mom and aunts could begin preparing for the Thanksgiving feast.

Usually at my grandmother's house, lunch would be served around 1 p.m. My grandparents had to watch "Price is Right" and the first 15 minutes or so of the Atlanta news. Then they would throw lunch together. But at Thanksgiving, there was no time for any of that. Not to mention that the "Price is Right," with Bob Barker saving the pet population, was not on Thanksgiving morning.

We were lucky to be sitting down for that big turkey dinner by 2 p.m.

Between breakfast and that 2 p.m. gathering around the table, us grandkids were entertained by the annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. We would watch the floats; the marching bands and those big balloons cross that big box TV in my grandparent's front room. My aunts stood guard at the kitchen door, keeping us children from trying to sneak in and get any small snack from there. But we all knew, what grandma was cooking was worth the wait.

We just had to smell the turkey and dressing and all the other Thanksgiving sides that would soon be placed in the middle of the table. My brother and I were the oldest grandkids. I remember we used to ask for macaroni and cheese for Thanksgiving. My grandmother said, "No. You can have that any time the rest of the year."

Years later, while looking at the food being placed on my grandmother's table, I saw a big bowl of macaroni and cheese. Apparently one of my cousins asked for it and was able to convince my grandmother to make it. I started to complain.

"Hey, why do we now have macaroni and cheese when my brother and I have been asking for this for Thanksgiving for years?" I asked out loud. Without missing a beat my brother told me to be quiet. "This means we can have macaroni and cheese too," my brother whispered as I quickly agreed with him and dropped the subject.

The food was always great and so was the homemade dessert. There was never a bad meal, which I can say was true every time my grandmother cooked.

What I have previously described are all memories. My grandparents' house in Toccoa, Ga., is still there. The last time we gathered there for that Thanksgiving feast was in the early 2000s. I look back now and realize I did not know how good I had it. I thought it would always be that way.

But with my grandparent's passing, those Thanksgiving meals sadly came to an end. It was hard to get that side of the family together because a lot of us cousins were starting families and new traditions.

For my wife and I, we went from bringing the sides to my family in Milledgeville to bringing the turkey, dressing, green bean casserole and sweet potato casserole, not to mention the cranberry sauce (with ridges – I must see the ridges).

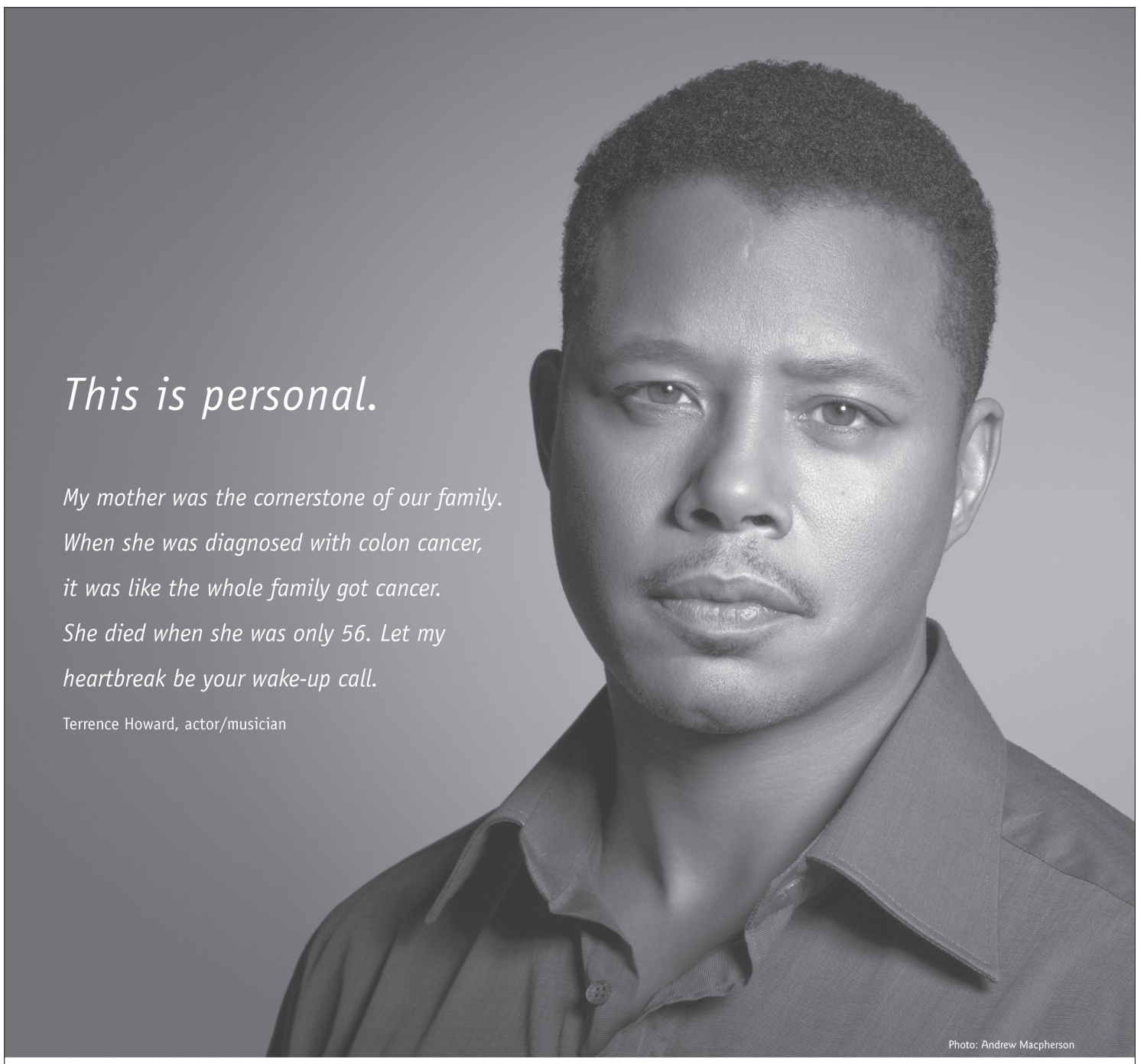
About a month ago, my mother fell and eventually had to go to a place to do physical therapy for a few weeks. We did not know if we were going to see her at my uncle's house for Thanksgiving this year. When asked, I promised we were going to be bringing some turkey, dressing and the sides – either at my uncle's house or wherever she was doing her PT.

As of right now, she is set to be at my uncle's house since she was released from PT last weekend. No matter what though, we were going to celebrate Thanksgiving.

As for that one thing that will not change at Thanksgiving for us, it is the fact that we will gather as a family and someone will pray thanking God for the many blessings He has given us this year. No matter how your life is going, there must be something to be thankful for.

So, my prayer and hope is that you and your family will be able to gather around the table and eat a good meal. Enjoy your time together. Treasure the moments you have.

And then, sit back and enjoy my other favorite thing about this week which begins this Thursday and goes throughout the weekend – football along with leftover turkey.



Colorectal cancer is the second leading cancer killer in the U.S., but it is largely preventable. If you're 50 or older, please get screened. Screening finds precancerous polyps, so they can be removed before they turn into cancer. And screening finds colorectal cancer early, when treatment works best. If you're at increased risk—if you have a personal or family history of polyps or colorectal cancer, or you have inflammatory bowel disease—ask your doctor when to start screening. **Screening saves lives.**

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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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EIF National Colorectal Cancer RESEARCH ALLIANCE™ Entertainment Industry Foundation Program

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DAILY SCRIPTURE...

"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. "

- Psalm 100:4 (KJV)

THOUGHT FOR TODAY...

"Be thankful for everything that happens in your life; it's all an experience."

- Roy T. Bennett

EVERY DAY'S A HOLIDAY...

Nov. 24, 2026 is...

- D.B. Cooper Day
- National Sardines Day
- Celebrate Your Unique Talent Day

YOUR TURN:

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If the sheriff's department has all these pick up trucks they need to ride all the roads and pick up all the dead deer on the roads and haul them off. No one is doing anything about it.

We in the county don't want any part of consolidation. You are the rudest people with your driving and you double park everywhere. You in the handicap parking and they look mean at you if you look at them for parking there. Nobody wants to be a part of you. It won't be before long that the county will have its own stores and stuff to go to.

You got trash piling up in North Dublin and won't do anything about it. Don't fear. Don't fear it at all. Call the yard sheriff.

How much revenue does each government collect per employee and what services does it deliver? Comparing staffing costs could reveal where consolidation creates efficiencies. Consolidation is a must!

A growing tax digest should help spread the cost of government. Consolidation could align development and spending decisions so growth benefits more taxpayers.

Could unified billing, collections and financial reporting reduce uncollected fees and missed revenue? Better collections might ease pressure for future tax increases.

Could a Dublin-led consolidation charter ensure annual public reporting of actual savings versus promised savings? Taxpayers deserve proof, not projections.

New development creates infrastructure costs. A unified government could review lawful developer contributions so existing taxpayers aren't left funding every expansion.

For everyone's safety, prison transport vans at Fairview Park Hospital should use a designated rear parking area away from the main patient and visitor entrances.

Are security officers assigned to prisoners at Fairview Park Hospital adequately trained and equipped to respond to emergencies? A review would benefit everyone.

It's good to hear from those on the inside as to the severity of the prisoner problem at Fairview Park Hospital. We need more to come forward with the truth about what's happening here.

I witnessed a county commissioner dragging a dead deer out the roadway in a selfless act to protect those on the morning commute. We need more servant leaders in this community who lead by example.

Congratulations to Matt Hatchett for being re-elected. But, he will now be a member of the minority of the Georgia House.

Housing authorities need to do better. How can Vinson Village get done twice before Katie Dudley, Williams Street and Hudson Street. Where is the money going?

TELL IT! GUIDELINES

Have something to say about life in Dublin and Laurens County? We want to hear it. Tell It! is a space for community voices: praise, frustration, questions and everything in between.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Keep it local. Submissions should focus on issues, people and places in Dublin and Laurens County. We are not the right venue for commentary on national politics or public figures outside our community.

Be civil. Personal attacks, profanity and hate speech will not be published. Criticism is welcome; name-calling is not.

Stick to the facts. Submissions must not contain false statements of fact about identifiable individuals or organizations. We cannot publish content that is defamatory or exposes the Courier Herald to legal liability.

The Courier Herald reserves the right to edit submissions for length and clarity, and to decline any submission at its sole discretion. Submission does not guarantee publication.

The Courier Herald

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This newspaper is committed to the idea that the press should tell the truth without prejudice and spread knowledge without malicious intent.

JOHNSON COUNTY 27, CLINCH COUNTY 24

'I was there when': Memorable comeback propels Trojans past Panthers, into state quarterfinals

By RALPH JACKSON
Correspondent

WRIGHTSVILLE - Mistakes and redemption were on full display in Friday's second-round game at The Blue Monster.

A comeback for the ages brought fans and players together as the Trojans advanced in the state playoffs, defeating Clinch County 27-24.

Before the game, Johnson County Coach Don Norton told his players that something would happen that night that people would remember for years to come. Something that would make them say, "I was there when..."

By the time the night was over, the Trojans had given their fans more than one such moment.

The victory was anything but easy for a Johnson County team that had rarely faced adversity during its undefeated season. Turnovers and missed opportunities allowed Clinch County to remain in contention despite being thoroughly outplayed.

The Trojans struck first when Jeremiah Scott returned a punt 48 yards for a touchdown. Grayson Jackson added the extra point for a 7-0 lead.

But Clinch answered with an interception return for a touchdown, tying the game before Scott scored again on a 10-yard run to put Johnson County ahead 14-7.

The Panthers added a field goal before halftime and then scored twice in the third quarter, including a touchdown following a Trojan fumble that gave Clinch the football deep in Johnson County territory.

Suddenly, the Trojans were facing a 24-14 deficit in a playoff elimination game.

"We made a few bonehead mistakes early, and we just kept on keeping on," Norton said.

Quarterback Chance Wombles said the players remained determined not to let their season end.

"One thing we kept saying tonight was we're not going home," he said.

Johnson County began its comeback late in the third quarter. Scott broke loose for a 17-yard gain, and Jacaden Webb followed with a 43-yard run that put the Trojans in scoring position.

Scott scored from seven yards out on the first play of the fourth quarter, cutting the deficit to 24-20.

The Trojan defense then forced Clinch to punt, setting the stage for one of the boldest decisions of the season.

Trailing by four points, Johnson County faced fourth-and-six from its own 36-yard line with just over six minutes remaining.

Rather than punt and hope to get the football back, Norton and his players decided to take their chances.

"We asked the kids what they wanted to do, and we were all on the same page," Norton said. "We were going for it.

"We were not playing to tie. We were not playing to lose, we were playing to win."

Wombles delivered, finding Daezon Devero for a 24-yard completion that moved the ball to the Clinch County 40-yard line and kept the drive alive.

The Trojans overcame a penalty, with Jeremiah Taylor breaking a 25-yard run to move Johnson County deep into Panther territory.

Scott finished the drive with a 21-yard touchdown run. Jackson's extra point put Johnson County ahead 27-24 with 5:13 remaining.

Devero, whose fourth-down reception helped turn the game around, said the Trojans never lost faith in one another.

"We all lift each other up and we just tried to keep going until the game was over," Devero said.

He added that the players understood that overcoming

JOCO
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Jeremiah Scott follows the block of Cedric Bridges on a run for several of his 157 rushing yards. The junior ran for three touchdowns, and returned a punt for a fourth, in Friday's victory/RALPH JACKSON

SWAINSBORO 13, DUBLIN 7

Tigers triumph in trenches, take second-round rematch with Irish

By CLAY REYNOLDS
AND HORACE AUSTIN



Dublin senior Jalen Dardy takes a knee at midfield, while the Swainsboro sideline celebrates its upset victory in the backdrop, after a Tiger interception on the game's final play/HORACE AUSTIN

The old adage that it's hard to beat a good team twice proved true for Dublin Friday night in its rematch with a Swainsboro team that, despite falling short 27-12 in the teams' original battle Oct. 9, left the Irish with a distinct sense of dread about a potential second meeting in the postseason.

Their worst fears came true as the Tigers, arguably region 2-AA's hottest team on a four-game win streak between the two games, took a confident upper hand to pull off a 13-7 stunner in the Shamrock Bowl.

The 78th and first-ever state playoff edition of Middle Georgia's Oldest Rivalry was another well-played one by both teams. But some increasingly nasty Swainsboro defense, and consistently inopportune bounces for Dublin, produced the opposite outcome.

In a reversal of roles from the regular season, it was the Tigers who seemed to play the sharper football, and Irish who didn't have their best night.

"I think the best team tonight won," said Dublin head coach Roger Holmes.

What was the difference? Put simply, Swainsboro was the much more physical team.

After only a mixed bag of success with a more balanced attack last month, the Tigers came back to the Bowl with a purpose of running the football, and did it with a little bit of both power, on carries straight ahead by bruising sophomore Kyle Johnson, and finesse, in the form of lateral action involving Daveyhon Williams and others that OCs Ridge Ferrell and Kade Youmans seemed to dial up at just the right times.

Both backs scored touchdowns, one in each half, to give Swainsboro a 13-0 lead that withstood three of the four Irish scoring threats.

Its defense knocked Dublin back a lot harder than it's used to, and became only a second this season (the other Baldwin, Sept. 4) to hold the Irish to less than 200 yards rushing. The Tigers are also the first team since Fitzgerald in the second round of last year's state tournament to keep them to a single touchdown, which only came in the last five minutes of the contest.

"They came to play," Holmes said. "I don't think our young men weren't ready to play, it's just we kinda got whipped up front. We couldn't really get anything going, but I was real proud of them rallying trying to get it together in the fourth quarter there, but too little too late."

Seemingly every one of Dublin's opportunities to respond were plagued by tough breaks, even the one that did ultimately get points to cut a two-score lead down to the final six.

The Irish were slated to take the football back over in plus territory on a short punt from deep in Swainsboro's own that got a 17-yard bounce to push the start to Dublin's 45. Then a flag for downfield holding would grant the Tigers a reprieve after several missed tackles on a 55-yard Ryland Yates touchdown run as the Irish quarterback pulled a midline read and rerouted left to find daylight on the very next play.

They had to burn some valuable time, but got to the end zone after all following six more plays that included two double-digit gains by Trav Bostic, and a sneaker over the middle by Yates for the score.

Will Wallace's point-after kick made it 13-7 with a little more than four minutes to go.

Dublin's D made quick work of a Swainsboro series from its own 40 to get the football back. Johnson was bottled on two carries in a row, then hammered off the right side by Jamarcus Knight after a short completion on third down, to put the Tigers in punt formation.

The Irish went into two-minute mode, and quickly progressed to midfield as Yates hooked up with Wallace three times in four plays. The clock hit the 60-second mark just as Jaydon McRae dove down the middle for another first down, and a spike halted it at :52.

Dublin came up empty on an attempted reverse run, but drew consecutive interference flags during the next sequence of snaps to get itself a clean shot at the end zone from 12 yards out (then 17 after a false start) with 10 seconds to go.

But miscommunication begat disaster as the Irish tried to set up a quick slant pass It was thrown behind Wallace, who didn't even realize the ball was coming and continued downfield, leaving Swainsboro DB Caleb Jones for an interception and return that ran off what little time remained.

The loss brings an unpleasant ending to a season that had some potential state title aspirations for Dublin, which finishes with a 10-2 overall record after advancing in the state playoffs for a fifth-consecutive season.

The Irish, looking back, will have reason to feel a bit short changed by their draw in the bracket at No. 4, where they were paired over again with two previous opponents out of 2-AA, while Bleckley County, Dodge County and Swainsboro (with the exception of this game) advanced to the quarterfinals past first- and second-round competition outside of a league that perhaps now has an argument (with three teams of the remaining eight left standing) for perhaps being the toughest in the class.

Rather than a reunion of mentor and mentee in a quarterfinal that would have pitted seeds 4 and 5, bringing Jeff Davis head coach Lance Helton back to the Shamrock Bowl for the first time in a regular-season game, it's a surprise home game in the round of eight as the Yellow Jackets (which defeated Laney 37-12) make their first quarterfinal appearance since 1990.

'We couldn't ever get anything going'...

Friday's return visit to the Bowl was surprisingly unproductive offensively for the Tigers, whose total yardage numbered only 158 in comparison to the 300-plus they gained in a much more active but also turnover-plagued game back in October.

Passing plays and yards, in the first, accounted for about 40 percent of the

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PEACH COUNTY 49, WEST LAURENS 0

Raiders taken apart by top-seeded Trojans

By CLAY REYNOLDS
Sports Editor

FORT VALLEY – To some extent, a blowout of this caliber was to be expected Friday night as West Laurens went up against the state's No. 1 seed in the second round of the GHSA playoffs.

The Raiders would've only hoped for a slightly more competitive showing.

They wound up getting shredded as thoroughly as Peach County's first-round opponent East Jackson, and beaten by the same 49-0 score, as the Trojans rumbled to their 20th state quarterfinal appearance.

Though this young West Laurens team had few realistic expectations of a shot to win, its consistent record of challenging top-ranked teams throughout the season offered some indication that this one could be kept somewhat close for at least a little while.

But that possibility was taken out of the question as quickly as Peach raced down the field to the first few of its five touchdowns in the first 12 minutes.

The Raiders, who could only put up minimal resistance on defense, struggled just as much moving the football the other direction in a performance that ended their season on a rather sour note.

"We definitely could've done a lot better than we did tonight," said West Laurens head coach Kip Burdette. "I don't want to tarnish what we've done. We're proud of the season we've had. We're proud of the things we've accomplished, but we want to get to a point as a program where we're getting into these situations and expecting to overcome them."

The Trojans were every bit as dominant as projected.

They scored on every possession, and allowed just one first down, before halftime.

In all, Peach outgained the Raiders 389-75 in total yardage.

Take away all for their offense – the seventh-top scoring in the GHSA at a per-game average of the exact 49 they put up – except the three-headed running back monster of Ashton Barton, DeAndre Stinson and Zion Ellison, and they were still probably looking at a rout of similar proportions.

Barton touched the ball only three times, covering all 95 yards that comprised Peach County's scoring drive to open the game.

He brought the kickoff back 50 yards from the corner to just over midfield, then carried for five and the remaining 40, along with a touchdown, on back-to-back plays that were his last of the night.

Ellison and Stinson took over from there.

The former led all rushers with 16 carries for 120 yards, and had touchdowns from distances of 29 and four. The latter took a punt back 65 yards for the third score of the night, and carried for another immediately after on his way to 76 yards on nine attempts.

Quarterback Caiden Ivory, who was 7-of-10 for 101, hit Tristen Brown from 34 yards out to conclude possession No. 2, and lofted a five-yard pop pass for Jade Danielly to finish the perfect half as head coach Marquis Westbrook took a timeout with 10 seconds to go to allow one final play.

The Raiders were pretty well outmatched at the line of scrimmage, and by Trojan athletes in space, but didn't help matters by committing a first-quarter turnover, giving up some long special teams returns and making several other mistakes they could ill afford.

A lack of any consistent offensive progress in the early going also sent plans of attempting to control the football out the window. Just a couple plays into the third West Laurens possession, Peach County had already run 23 plays against the Raiders eight.

"We definitely didn't help ourself out tonight," Burdette said. "We gave a good team some fuel to the fire, so to speak. We can't do that."

Jace Williams, the Raiders' the leading gainer with 52 all-purpose yards, ran for 12 after a screen catch on their first offensive play for the only move of the chains

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spread. This time, they unbalanced the gameplan significantly, throwing the ball on just six out of 37 snaps.

The sophomore workhorse Johnson had 100 yards flat on 23 out of the 31 available carries. And a majority of both his and the team's number would be attributed to an 86-yard scoring drive that broke the game's scoreless deadlock in the second quarter.

Swainsboro wouldn't reach scoring range again if not for its special teams unit, which stepped up to block a Dublin punt that set up the only other touchdown late in quarter 3.

The play, Holmes noted, was one of "three mistakes in the kicking game" that had a significant impact.

Jayden WIlcher, Ja'Bios Smith and Derek Hughes each had double-digit tackles to lead a defensive effort that frustrated Irish efforts to respond.

"We couldn't ever get anything going offensively against them," Holmes said. "We knew it was going to be a tough matchup. From their standpoint, defensively, they run well. They're physical. They have three really good D-linemen. I thought, defensively, we played good enough to win."

Costly penalties were as unpleasant a theme throughout the night for Dublin, which also had another earlier potential touchdown run negated by holding as Bostic took an option pitch and turned the corner to score from 19 yards late in the first quarter.

That followed an exchange of punts, with a little special teams drama sprinkled in, on the teams' first three offensive possessions that achieved just one first down.

Swainsboro's Wilcher brought the opening kickoff out to the 50 before a quick three-and-out. The Irish nearly got into trouble on the punt reception as an awkward bounce inside the 10 almost nicked Wallace to give the Tigers a touchdown recovery in the end zone. But the play was ruled a touchback.



Dublin quarterback Ryland Yates sprints by as the umpire takes a hard spill after being rolled up on from behind by a defender on an Irish fourth-down conversion run late in the second quarter. But the scoring opportunity would come up empty as time ran out with goal to go on the next three plays/HORACE AUSTIN

Dublin punted the visitors back to their own 25, where Ja'Bios Smith's successful fake punt – seemingly by necessity, rather than design, as an unblocked rusher bore down on him – got Swainsboro an extra series before it was forced to kick it back yet again.

A holding penalty started the Irish from back at their own 13, but a 34-yard carry on the first play by Dontavious Cannon created some momentum.

A Yates keeper got the Irish another first down, but besides the Bostic breakaway that wasn't, couldn't get any further as Wilcher and Jayvion Sherrod played two other lateral runs perfectly to set the Irish in a fourth and 11 at the end of the first quarter.

On the other side, Holmes dialed up a screen pass with a decent shot of converting, but Swainsboro's D.J. Cuyler undercut some blocking that was set up toward the left boundary and funneled the play back inside where several fellow Tigers were waiting to wrap up Knight a good five yards short at the 14.

Swainsboro turned around and immediately caught a positive break as Knight leapt to bat down a Joshua Gray pass that instead went right through his hands, and was brought in Williams for a 21-yard gain.

The Irish were busted for another big play on the very next snap as some defenders got a little too deep past the line of scrimmage, and Johnso nslipped into the open off the right and picked up another 20.

Dublin forced a third down on the next series with two solid tackles on the interior, but couldn't get off the field as the Tigers got tricky, and ran a reverse of their own to Williams for a left-side conversion.

They proceeded to work their way inside the red zone, and then over the goal line on Williams' three-yard dive off the left.

Kye Young blocked the PAT to make the early score 6-0 with north of five minutes to go in the half.

Easily the night's most stinging missed chance would keep the Irish scoreless after a long drive to get within layup range as time expired.

Two runs by Bostic and one by Cannon took them quickly to the red zone, though a sack by Hughes took them back out before Cannon's third-down draw play helped regain the original line of scrimmage for a shot on fourth down.

Yates pulled a rabbit from his helmet as he dropped to throw, scrambled and was nearly tackled by the umpire-turned-Irish blocker, who took a spill in the midst of the melee as he scurried by and out of bounds at the 5 to move the chains.

It was a surefire opportunity to tie or take the lead with three, and perhaps four plays possible in the minuscule remaining time.

But none of them went according to plan.

Yates' rollout pass for Bostic on first down flew off target, as he opted not to make a run for it in view of the time and timeout situation with only 15 seconds left.

He'd find Bostic off the left on the next play, but the tackle of Jones knocked him out two yards shy of the line. And a third-down pass, off a soft roll to the right, whistled incomplete past Wallace in the middle of the end zone just as the last second dropped from the clock.

Dublin went to the half empty-handed.

Swainsboro returned from the break hitting extra hard. The Florida commit Smith delivered a thunderous blow on Bond to knock the first Irish play for no gain. Wilcher and Hughes destroyed two subsequent runs to complete the tone-setting defensive series.

Then the Tigers got back to running the ball hard, on a drive from their 14 that wouldn't score, but did eat up a considerable amount of clock before a punt, and another Dublin three and out – this one with a recurrence of penalties that didn't help the home cause.

Christian Tarver fought his way through a block and leapt to deflect the punt of Yates to start Swainsboro just five yards from the Irish end zone.

And Johnson needed only one play to punch in what would loom large as the game's deciding touchdown.

"(That) was something we'd worked on," Holmes said. "We knew (Tarver) was their guy off the edge, and we had to be real firm against him and we didn't do a real good job right there."

Dublin wouldn't be able to chip away at the advantage until the last possible moment, thanks to more devastating flags that would force them to punt again after two first downs of progress on the ensuing drive.

The backbreaker was some roughness after the whistle for a downfield blocker in the aftermath of a second-down play to put the Irish well behind the chains.

Swainsboro held Dublin to only 175 yards on the ground. Cannon was the Irish leader with 13 carries for 92 of them. No one else was able to pick up more than 40.

Yates finished 10-of-19 with 81 yards. Bostic, with three catches for 23, and Wallace, with four for 41, were his leading targets.

Zion Porter led tacklers with eight stops total.

SCOREBOARD

FOOTBALL
Friday
Peach Co. 49,
West Laurens 0
Swainsboro 13, Dublin 7
Johnson Co. 27,
Clinch Co. 24
Dodge Co. 35,
Thomasville 31
Bleckley Co. 49, Pepperell 9
Lincoln Co. 28, Treutlen 0

GIRLS HOOPS
Saturday
WL 56, Bacon Co. 47

BOYS HOOPS
Saturday
Coffee 64, WL 32

PREP SCHEDULE

FOOTBALL
GHSA Quarterfinals
Friday
Bremen at Bleckley Co.
Dodge Co. at Commerce
Macon Co. at Johnson Co.
/7:30 p.m.

BASKETBALL
Monday
Hugh McBride Tip-off
(at Jeff Davis)
WL (boys) vs.
Camden Co.
/4 p.m.

Tuesday
Dublin (girls)
at Screven Co./4 p.m.
Trinity at Westfield
/6 p.m.
East Laurens (boys) vs.
Portal (at SE Bulloch)
/6 p.m.
STC Tip-off Classic
WL (girls) at Vidalia
/7 p.m.

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before halftime.

The quick start got West to midfield, and into Trojan territory with a five-yard Kaden Bloodsaw run on the next play. But the momentum quickly dissipated after one more snap, as a hit knocked the ball from the arms of Jaden Stanley off the left side on a jet sweep, and Peach recovered for a quick return trip to the end zone to go ahead 14-0.

The Raiders would spend the rest of the half in their own territory, and shy of the line to gain on three-and-out possessions. They'd suffer a setback early in the second quarter with an injury to quarterback Duggan Malone, who wouldn't return, and were forced to complete the night with a mix of passers and wildcat-style runners including Williams, Stanley, J.D. Hogan and freshman Chris Brown.

The count was unchanged for either team in a running-clock third and fourth quarter.

Uphill the whole way...

Bright spots were few, but among them some early-series tackles to keep the Peach County rushing attack from running completely free.

Though the Trojans averaged seven yards per carry, the stops of Hogan, Devin Watkins, Maxx Chafin and Jamari Blash forced them to run a decent number of plays to get down the field as a majority of series matured to a third down.

But neither those, nor a single fourth down that Peach converted late on the final march to add a seventh TD, were no problem, and the big play to score was never more than a few additional snaps away.

West Laurens wouldn't succeed in getting the Trojans off the field until their backups entered in the second half.

The Raiders started it with a turnover on downs, via bad punt snap, after some gains led them back to plus territory, but returned the favor with a tackle in front of the stick on a fourth-down completion moments later.

A late scoring opportunity emerged in the fourth quarter as the Trojans' backup passer B.J. Strickland attempted to force a ball into traffic off the scramble, and it got picked off by Hogan.

A strong run by Williams got West Laurens into the red zone, and another by Hogan advanced the Raiders inside the five.

But a string of penalties that set back the start of the goal-to-go series got things off track as the Raiders attempted to break the goose egg. Its shell proved too thick as their fourth-down pass fell incomplete, and also short of the goal line, with a few minutes left to go.

"It definitely didn't go the way we wanted it to," Hogan said. "But we always look forward to next year. We've got a bunch of kids going back. So it's time to start the next year and get back to work."

This was only the second time this season – the other a 24-point opening loss to Bleckley County – that West Laurens ran up against a team that was simply better.

Over the 10 games in between, the Raiders surprised themselves with how much great football they were able to play.

Winning seven, and a second-straight region title as a bonus, turned out to be a massive success for a season they began in a definite rebuilding phase.

"We knew it was going to be a little down," Burdette said. "I don't know if we knew we were going to be here after we played Bleckley County. I think we're a lot better team than we were at that point. I'm really proud of the progress we made."

The strong finish bodes well for next season, when they'll have a lot on both sides of the ball returning on a roster that will have a chance to build on it.

This game proved what one opponent or another, eventually, was bound to: That the Raiders remain a young team with some more steps still in front of them to reach their full potential.

Look for many of those to be made next fall.

"We'll learn these lessons and hopefully we'll get to a point next year, we've got a lot coming back that we're excited about," Burdette said. "We're gonna have to have a great offseason and give ourself a chance to be really good."

JOCO

Continued from page 5

the deficit would require an even greater effort.

"Every block was harder. Every run was harder and everything else we had to do harder."

Another play to remember...

But Johnson County was not finished making memorable plays.

Following the go-ahead touchdown, Jackson executed an onside kick that the Trojans recovered, giving Johnson County another possession with just over five minutes remaining.

The recovery was a gamble that paid off, but the Trojans still had work to do. Clinch County had already demonstrated that it had a capable field goal kicker, and a field goal was all the Panthers needed to tie the game. Johnson County needed first downs, not simply possession, to keep the ball out of Clinch County's hands.

Taylor converted a fourth-and-one with a four-yard run, extending the possession and keeping the clock moving.

Then came the play Norton had seemingly predicted before the game.

Facing third-and-eight, Taylor took the handoff and appeared to be stopped behind the line of scrimmage. Clinch County defenders surrounded him, and for a moment the play seemed finished.

But Taylor refused to go down.

He fought through the defenders, carrying several Panthers with him as he powered forward for a six-yard gain. A penalty against Clinch on the following fourth-down play gave Johnson County another first down.

It was a remarkable display of determination, and one Norton believes will be remembered long after the final score fades from memory.

"I don't understand how he did it, but his toughness and will to win was second to none," Norton said.

The coach recalled telling his players before the game that they would have an opportunity to create a moment people would always remember.

Classifieds

Wanted

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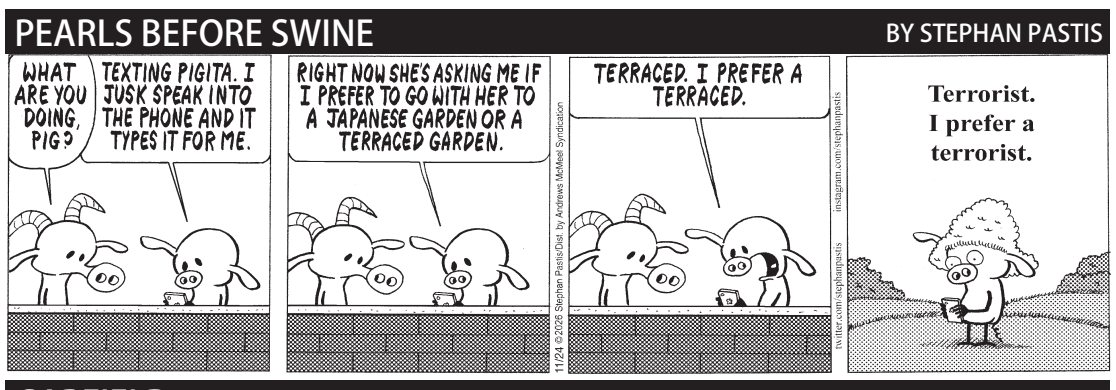
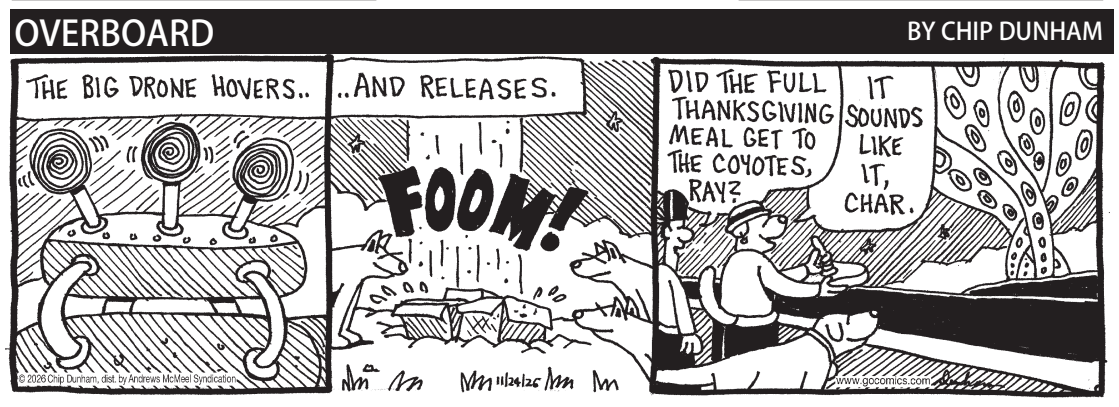
PEARLS BEFORE SWINE — BY STEPHAN PASTIS



GARFIELD — BY JIM DAVIS



OVERBOARD — BY CHIP DUNHAM



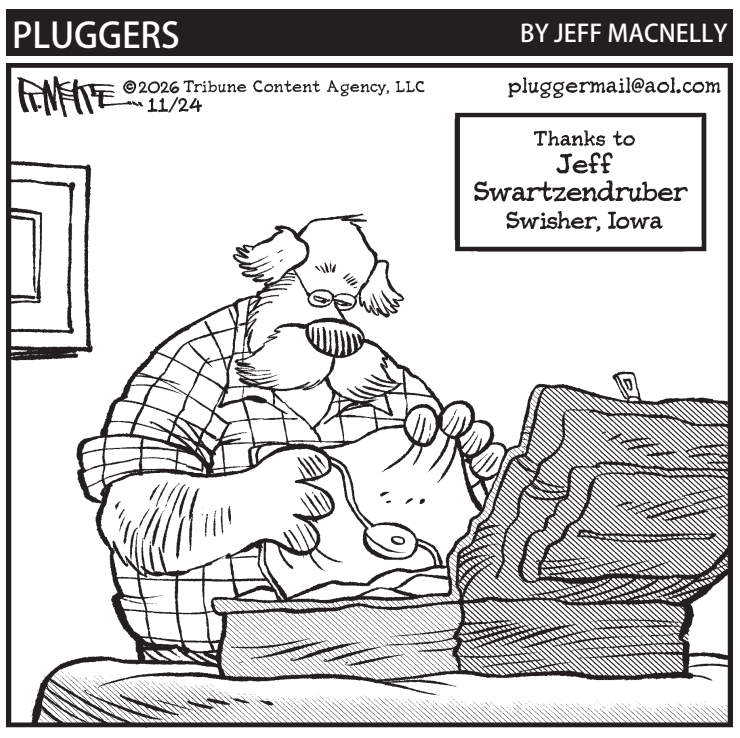
DEFLOCKED — BY JEFF CORRIVEAU



ZIGGY — BY TOM WILSON



PLUGGERS — BY JEFF MACNELLY



You're a plugger if you save room in your luggage for a heating pad.

Fiance's slovenly habits could be a deal-breaker



DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: I have been dating a nice man for 18 months. We get along great. He's smart, hardworking, dedicated and loving. We share the same faith. He has been a widower for two years, and I'm divorced.

When he proposed, I said yes, but I'm worried because his house is always messy and in disarray. He has a big dog that sheds, so there's a lot of fur on the floor. He also tends to leave papers lying around the house. The tub is filthy, and the floors need washing. I love spending time with him, but I get anxious when I think I would have to live like that.

In addition, his older daughters are slobs, too. He tries to get the girls to help, and he does do some cleaning himself, but it's never really clean. We plan to buy a house of our own, but I'm wondering if I should end the relationship over something that may not be a big deal, or if I'll be miserable as the only one doing housework. Should I overlook this because he's a great guy, or do I break both our hearts and walk away? -- TIDY IN CANADA

DEAR TIDY: Do not overlook this. If you haven't had a frank discussion with your fiance about household chores, you should. Obviously, your standards of cleanliness differ greatly from his and his daughters' -- and probably his late wife's. You should not be stuck in the role of housemaid. If that happens, you will be miserable. Nor should you have to police your home like a white-gloved drill sergeant.

A monthly cleaning service could fix this problem if the two of you can afford it; so could a firm agreement on their part to cooperate and shape up. Show your fiance what "clean" looks like to you, and demonstrate exactly how much of the burden you are willing to shoulder during a trial month. Do not marry this man until his family can prove they are able to keep their home up to your cleanliness standards.

****

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I separated almost a year ago. I went on a dating app and met two great guys. One, "Adam," has asked me to marry him, but now I'm back with my husband. Adam refuses to give up on me. The second guy says he will wait until we can be together, which we can't. I'm torn because I love my husband and want things to work out for us, but I have developed feelings for both of these other men. I think both are aware of it. Please advise me. -- TOO MUCH CHOICE IN FLORIDA

DEAR TOO MUCH: It may seem like you have too much choice, but in reality, you've already made your decision: You never divorced your husband, you still love him and you want your marriage to work. Encouraging the men you have cultivated feelings for during your furlough is unfair to both of them. So quit stalling, pull the plug(s) and get on with your marriage.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren. For nearly four decades, Jeanne Phillips penned this column, which was founded in 1956 by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 270135, Kansas City, MO 64127. COPYRIGHT 2026 ANDREWS MCMEEL SYNDICATION, 1130 Walnut, Kansas City, MO 64106; 816-581-7500.

Monday, November 23, 2026

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH BOB JONES

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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ ANSWERS

Q 1 - Neither vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ K Q 10 8 ♡ K 10 4 ◇ A 8 7 6 ♣ A 6

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1◇	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	?	

What call would you make?

A - You are too good to simply raise to 3NT without showing your diamond fit, and a jump to 3D would not be forcing. The answer is to bid 2C, the "new minor," and continue with 3D next. That sequence is forcing.

Q 2 - North-South vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ A 7 6 3 ♡ Q 9 4 2 ◇ K Q 8 7 ♣ 7

Partner opens one heart and righthand opponent passes. What call would you make?

A - Bid 4C. We encourage all our readers, if they haven't done so already, to adopt splinter bids. They are simple to use and very effective. This bid shows a game-force with four or more trumps and shortness in the bid suit. Perfect!

Q 3 - East-West vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ A 10 9 8 3 ♡ Void ◇ K 4 ♣ Q J 9 8 6 4

As dealer, what call would you make?

A - This hand is well worth an opening bid, and even better, it is an easy hand to describe. Open 1C, planning to bid and re-bid spades if you get two more chances to bid.

Q 4 - Both vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ J 4 ♡ 5 3 ◇ A K 6 3 ♣ A Q J 8 2

As dealer, what call would you make?

A - Opening 1NT with 2-2 in the majors is usually a bad idea, and you are not strong enough to reverse. With a strong four-card diamond suit, we like opening 1D and rebidding 2C. This shows at least nine cards in the minors.

Q 5 - Neither vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ K Q 5 ♡ A Q 10 6 4 ◇ J 7 2 ♣ 10 9

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1◇	Pass	1♡	Pass
2♣	Pass	?	

What call would you make?

A - With at least nine cards in the minors, partner is unlikely to hold three hearts. Even if he does, 3NT might be best. Bid 3NT.

Q 6 - North-South vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ K 10 3 ♡ K J 4 ◇ Q ♣ A Q J 10 9 8

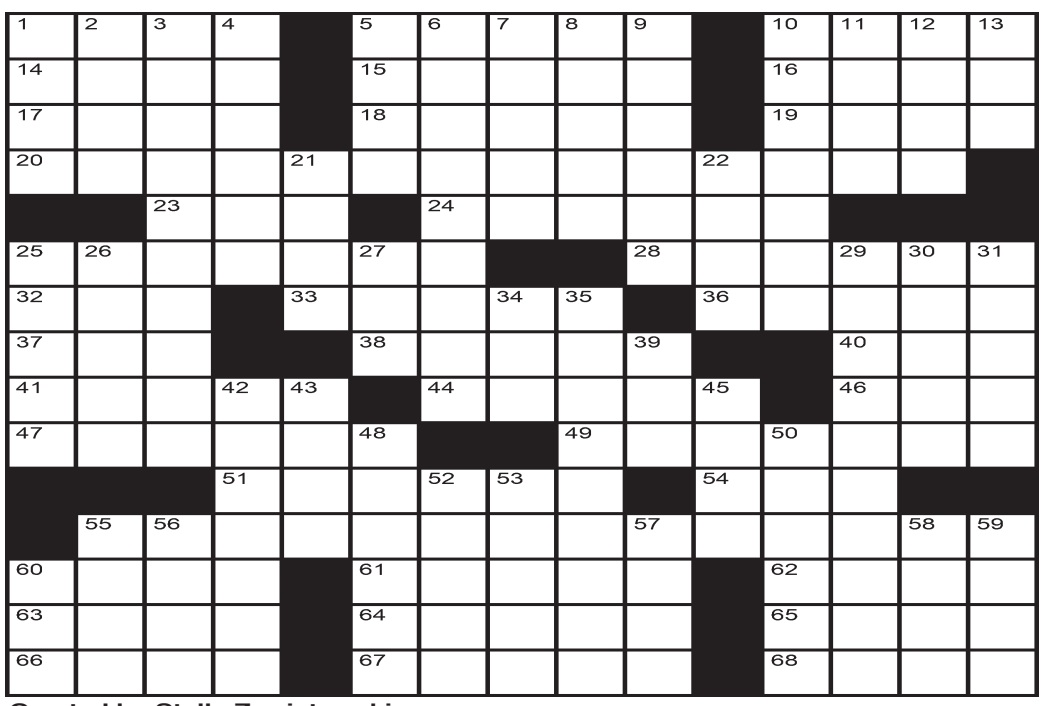
SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♣	Pass	1♡	Pass
?			

What call would you make?

A - The trump support and distribution are perfect for a raise with only three-card support, but the hand is too strong for 2H and you need 4-card support to jump raise. Bid 3C.

(Bob Jones welcomes readers' responses sent in care of this paper.)

THE Daily Commuter Puzzle by Stella Zawistowski



Created by Stella Zawistowski

ACROSS

1 Actress Garr
5 Cylindrical sandwiches
10 "Feline" Broadway musical
14 Without modifications: 2 wds.
15 "___ Good" (No Doubt song)
16 Twistable cookie
17 Gets bronzed
18 Islamic deity
19 Enjoy a book
20 First Roman emperor: 2 wds.
23 ___ culpa
24 Strong-arm
25 Fully determined: 2 wds.
28 Painter's classroom: 2 wds.
32 Apartment parts: Abbr.
33 Knit neckwear
36 Software customers
37 Behave
38 Pungent veggie
40 Small child
41 Unwanted plants
44 Jewish holy book
46 Briones of "The Pitt"
47 Ongoing TV show
49 Treble loudspeaker
51 Cured Italian meat
54 Mormon church: Abbr.
55 Famed Barcelona church: 2 wds.
60 Vegan protein
61 ___ Rights Act of 1964
62 Become fatigued
63 Is on TV
64 Prepare to propose
65 Funky smell
66 Fiendish plan
67 Pitcher Koufax
68 Nevada city

DOWN

1 "Cheerio!"
2 Jacob's twin
3 Circus host
4 Distributed
5 "___ do you mean?"
6 Feeling hesitant
7 "This is ___ sudden": 2 wds.
8 Location
9 Vast African desert
10 Boned undergarments
11 Field of study
12 Ragged rip
13 Roll of grass
21 Saucy quality
22 Light beige color
25 Makes a doodle
26 Awards-show host
27 "Green" prefix
29 "Ignore that": 2 wds.
30 Emerged
31 Bright heavenly body: 2 wds.
34 ___ de Janeiro
35 Nutrient-enriched
39 Casual "no"
42 Revulsion
43 Cook in a hot pan
45 Ship's wheel
48 Trousers
50 Newsroom chief
52 Singer Howard
53 Expert
55 Garden dirt
56 Bushy hairstyle
57 Supporter in war
58 Golf club type
59 Prefix with "drome"
60 Spigot

A	D	S	■	R	E	A	C	T	S	■	C	R	I	B
H	A	T	■	E	N	C	O	R	E	■	H	A	T	E
A	L	E	■	S	T	A	M	O	S	■	A	G	E	D
■	E	P	L	U	R	I	B	U	S	U	N	U	M	■
■	■	M	O	L	E	■	■	■	I	N	N	■	■	■
R	O	O	S	T	E	R	■	M	O	D	E	R	N	A
A	N	T	E	■	S	A	T	I	N	■	L	E	O	S
I	S	H	■	■	■	V	I	C	■	■	■	T	B	S
D	E	E	M	■	R	E	C	A	P	■	C	R	E	E
S	T	R	I	P	E	S	■	H	E	G	O	A	T	S
■	■	■	N	O	W	■	■	■	A	L	D	I	■	■
■	P	E	D	I	A	T	R	I	C	I	A	N	S	■
A	L	A	S	■	R	E	A	D	O	N	■	I	O	N
W	E	R	E	■	D	E	T	E	C	T	■	N	D	A
E	A	S	T	■	S	N	E	A	K	S	■	G	A	Y

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SUDOKU

9		5				1		2
			4		5			
6		7		8				
5		2				6	7	
			2		7		5	9
7				4	9		3	
					3	4	1	8
3	1		8	9			2	5
8	5		7				9	

Level: Beginner

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

ANSWER:

9	4	5	3	7	6	1	8	2
1	8	3	4	2	5	9	6	7
6	2	7	9	8	1	5	4	3
5	9	2	1	3	8	6	7	4
4	3	1	2	6	7	8	5	9
7	6	8	5	4	9	2	3	1
3	1	6	8	9	4	7	2	5
2	7	9	6	5	3	4	1	8
8	5	4	7	1	2	3	9	6


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KIDS' CORNER

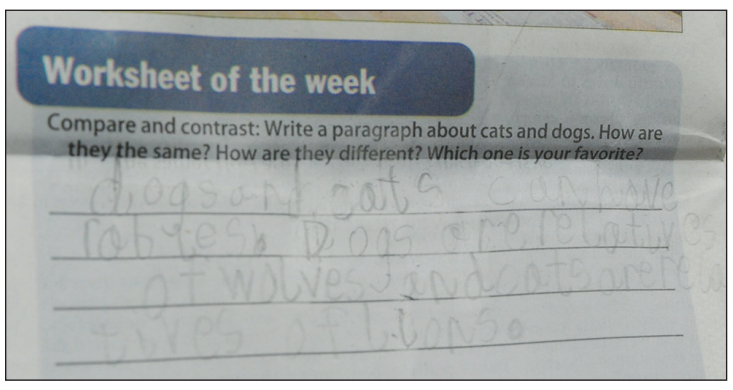
Brought to you by Dublin-Laurens County CHAMBER COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Vol. 037 | Follow Herald the Hound every Tuesday on Kids' Corner from The Courier Herald

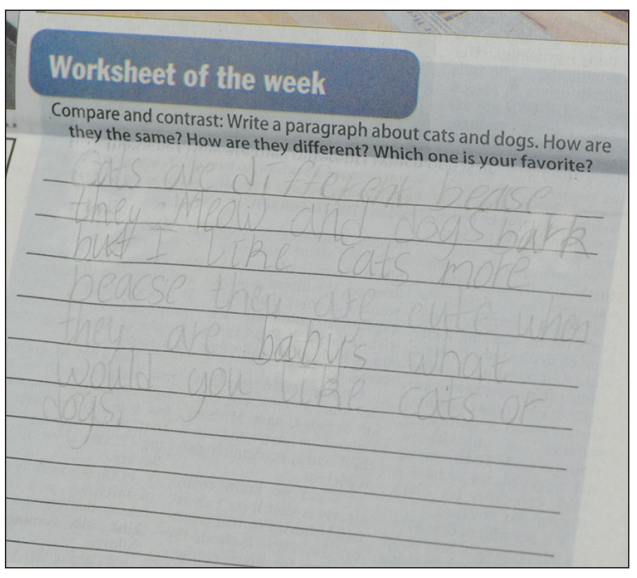
CLASS OF THE WEEK: Mrs. McCullars' second graders at Northwest Laurens



Herold the Hound made one more stop before the Thanksgiving break to visit with second graders in Mrs. Laurie McCullars' class. After hearing a story and learning more about newspapers, the students honed their writing and critical thinking skills by crafting a paragraph about cats and dogs. The students had to describe the two animals while highlighting their simularities and differences. This was a smart group of students! See two of their answers below.



"Dogs and cats can have rabies," wrote one student (above). "Dogs are relatives to wolves and cats are relatives to lions."



"Cats are different because they meow and dogs bark," another student penned (at right), "but I like cats more because they are cute when they are babies."





Puzzles4Kids by Helene Hovanec

CRISSCROSS – HOLIDAY PRESENTS

Each word will fit into one spot in the grid. Use the starting letters as a guide and fit each word into its spot. All words will be used, so cross off each one after you put it into the grid.

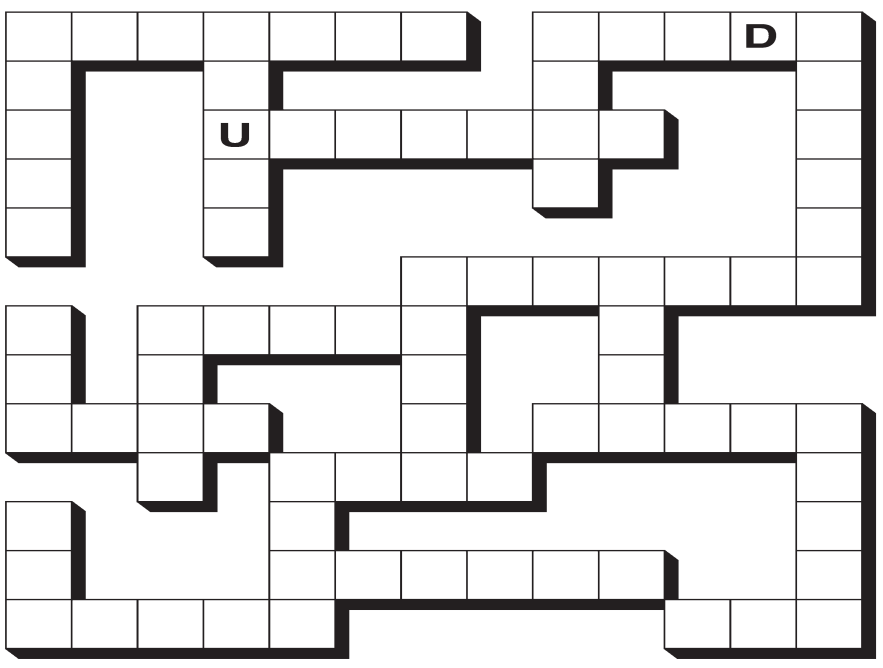
3 Letters
CAR
INK
TOP

4 Letters
BALL
BEAR
BIKE
RING
WAND
YO-YO

5 Letters
ATLAS
BEADS
CHALK
FLUTE
PAPER
ROBOT
TRUCK
WATCH

6 Letters
ART KIT
SKATES

7 Letters
ANT FARM
CRAYONS
UKULELE



MINI SUDOKU

	6	1			
	3				
	4				6
		6	1		
				6	4
			5		

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 6-box square contains all of the numbers from one to six.

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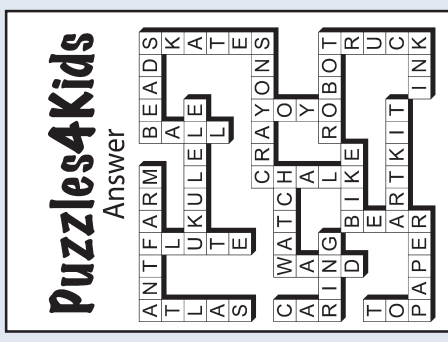
ANSWER KEYS

MINI SUDOKU ANSWERS

5	1	6	2	4	3
3	2	5	4	6	1
4	6	3	1	2	5
1	5	2	6	3	4
6	3	4	5	1	2
2	4	1	3	5	6

Puzzles4Kids Answer



TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Teachers, do you want us to visit your classroom? Students, do you have artwork, poems or stories you want to submit for possible publication? Email us at read@courierheraldtoday.com.